

V. REMARKS

In summary, the Office Action points out that the image display claimed in claim's 1 and 4 is readable from item 2 shown in Figure 1 of Inoue. However, what is denoted by the reference numeral 2 is a slot machine 2 itself. Claims 1, 3, 4 and 6 now recite an LCD panel (in lieu of the prior-claimed 'image display'). It is respectfully submitted that that an LCD panel is neither disclosed or suggested by any of the cited references.

Claims 1, 4 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by Inoue (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2004/0038726). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Inoue discloses a symbol display apparatus for game machine that includes a lined-up plurality of reel units. Each reel unit has double reel structure composed of an outer reel and an inner reel. Inside the inner reel, backlights are disposed. Peripheries of the outer and inner reels are so colored lightly as to be semitransparent so the outer and inner reels make an object disposed inside indistinct but transmit light. Inner symbols arranged on the periphery of the inner reel are printed with light color. When the inner and outer symbols are overlapped, the backlight emits white light. Color of the inner symbol illuminated with the white light does not affect adversely to appearance of the outer symbol. When the inner symbol is displayed through a transparent portion provided in the outer reel, the backlight emits light color of which is correspondent to the inner symbol for displaying the inner symbol emphatically and clearly.

Claim 1, as amended, is directed to a gaming machine that includes a plurality of symbol strips each having a plurality of symbols, a plurality of annular bodies to which each of the symbol strips are annularly attached, an LCD panel provided in front of the plurality of annular bodies and configured to electronically display an image concerning a game and at least one light source configured to illuminate the symbols from behind the symbols. Claim 1 recites that the plurality of annular bodies

are made transparent or semitransparent for transmitting light from the at least one light source in a direction of the LCD panel.

It is respectfully submitted that the rejection is improper because the applied art fails to teach each and every element of claim 1 as amended. Specifically, it is respectfully submitted that the applied art fails to teach an LCD panel provided in front of the plurality of annular bodies and configured to electronically display an image concerning a game. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that claim 1 is allowable over the applied art.

Claim 4, as amended, is directed to a gaming machine that includes a plurality of annular bodies each having an outer ring part on which a plurality of symbols are placed and an arm part joined to the outer ring part, an LCD panel provided in front of the plurality of annular bodies and configured to electronically display an image concerning a game and a light source configured to illuminate the symbols from behind the symbols. Claim 4 recites that the outer ring part in the arm part of each of the annular bodies are formed in one piece and at least a site margin of the outer ring is made transparent or semitransparent for transmitting light from the light source in a direction of the LCD panel.

As above, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection is improper because the applied art fails to teach each and every element of claim 4 as amended. Specifically, it is respectfully submitted that the applied art fails to teach an LCD panel provided in front of the plurality of annular bodies and configured to electronically display an image concerning a game. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that claim 4 is allowable over the applied art.

Claim 9 depends from claim 1 and includes all of the features of claim 1. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claim is allowable at least for the reasons claim 1 is allowable as well as for the features it recites.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 3, 6 and 12-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Inoue in view of Ozaki et al. (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2001/0031658). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Ozaki discloses a game machine that has a back side display unit composed of reels for displaying back patterns and a front side display unit composed of transparent EL panels for displaying overlapping patterns overlapping with the back patterns. The back side display unit and the front side display unit are disposed not to produce blind spot regions of the back patterns. The game machine provides various overlapping patterns with good visibility and a high game selection capability to a player.

Claim 3, as amended, is directed to a gaming machine that includes a plurality of symbol strips each having a plurality of symbols, a plurality of annular bodies to which each of the symbol strips are annularly attached, an LCD panel provided in front of the plurality of annular bodies and configured to electronically display an image concerning a game and a light source configured to illuminate the symbols from a slanting direction of a front of the symbols. Also, claim 3 recites that the plurality of annular bodies are formed to reflect light from the light source in a direction of the LCD panel.

It is respectfully submitted that none of the applied art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the features of claim 3 as amended. Specifically, it is respectfully submitted that the applied art, alone or in combination, fails to teach or suggest an LCD panel provided in front of the plurality of annular bodies and configured to electronically display an image concerning a game. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that one of ordinary skill in the art could not combine the features of the applied art to arrive at the claimed invention because the applied art is devoid of all the features of the claimed invention. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that claim 3 is allowable over the applied art.

Claim 6, as amended, is directed to a gaming machine that includes a plurality of annular bodies each having an outer ring on which a plurality of symbols are

placed and an arm part joined to the outer ring part, an LCD panel provided in front of the plurality of annular bodies and configured to display an image concerning game and a light source configured to illuminate the symbols from a slanting direction of a front of the symbols. Claim 6 also recites that the outer ring part and the arm part of each of the annular bodies are formed in one piece and at least a site margin of the outer ring part is formed to reflect light from the light source to diffuse in a direction of the LCD panel.

It is respectfully submitted that none of the applied art, alone or in combination, teaches or suggests the features of claim 6 as amended. Specifically, it is respectfully submitted that the applied art, alone or in combination, fails to teach or suggest an LCD panel provided in front of the plurality of annular bodies and configured to electronically display an image concerning a game. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that one of ordinary skill in the art could not combine the features of the applied art to arrive at the claimed invention because the applied art is devoid of all the features of the claimed invention. As a result, it is respectfully submitted that claim 6 is allowable over the applied art.

Claim 12 depends from claim 1 and includes all of the features of claim 1. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claim is allowable at least for the reasons claim 1 is allowable as well as for the features it recites.

Claim 13 depends from claim 4 and includes all of the features of claim 4. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claim is allowable at least for the reasons claim 4 is allowable as well as for the features it recites.

Claims 14 and 16 depend from claim 3 and include all of the features of claim 3. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claims are allowable at least for the reason claim 3 is allowable as well as for the features they recite.

Claims 15 and 17 depend from claim 6 and include all of the features of claim 6. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claims are allowable at least for the reason claim 6 is allowable as well as for the features they recite.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 7, 8, 10 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as unpatentable over Inoue. The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 7 and 8 depend from claim 1 and include all of the features of claim 1. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claims are allowable at least for the reason claim 1 is allowable as well as for the features they recite.

Claim 10 depends from claim 3 and includes all of the features of claim 3. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claim is allowable at least for the reasons claim 3 is allowable as well as for the features it recites.

Claim 11 depends from claim 6 and includes all of the features of claim 6. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the dependent claim is allowable at least for the reasons claim 6 is allowable as well as for the features it recites.

Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

It is respectfully submitted that the pending claims are believed to be in condition for allowance over the prior art of record. Therefore, this Amendment is believed to be a complete response to the outstanding Office Action. Further, Applicants assert that there are also reasons other than those set forth above why the pending claims are patentable. Applicants hereby reserve the right to set forth further arguments and remarks supporting the patentability of their claims, including the separate patentability of the dependent claims not explicitly addressed herein, in future papers.

Furthermore, for any instances in which the Examiner took Official Notice in the Office Action, Applicants expressly do not acquiesce to the taking of Official Notice, and respectfully request that the Examiner provide an affidavit to support the Official Notice taken in the next Office Action, as required by 37 CFR 1.104(d)(2) and MPEP § 2144.03.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration of the application and allowance of

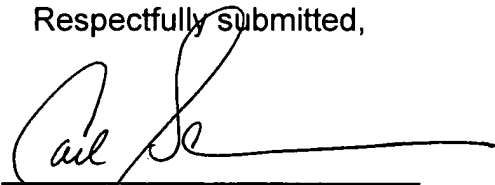
the pending claims are respectfully requested. Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the telephone number listed below.

Should additional fees be necessary in connection with the filing of this paper or if a Petition for Extension of Time is required for timely acceptance of the same, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 18-0013 for any such fees and Applicant(s) hereby petition for such extension of time.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: January 22, 2007

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Enclosure(s): Amendment Transmittal
 Petition for Extension of Time (1 month)

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